



The Global Compact for Migration UNECE Regional Review 2024

UK Submission

Overview

This update on the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) builds upon the UK's submissions to the Regional Review in 2020 and the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in 2022. It is not intended to be a fully comprehensive review of all GCM principles and objectives, but rather considers key areas of activity and interest for the UK. Reflecting the GCM's emphasis on a 'Whole of Government' and 'Whole of Society' approach, it is a joint product of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and Home Office (HO), with input from other relevant government departments. It also draws on ongoing dialogue with UK Civil Society, we are grateful in particular for the input of IOM UK's GCM engagement working group.

The UK is undertaking work both domestically and overseas which delivers on the guiding principles and objectives of the GCM. Through our whole of route approach, UK policy and programming seeks to: address humanitarian concerns facing migrants across the world; harness the benefits of regular migration for both host and origin countries; as well as addressing the challenges of irregular migration. Our renewed funding to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MMPTF) complements our national actions through advancing activity which implements all of the GCM objectives in a way that is sensitive to the cross-cutting principles which underpin the Compact. The UK is a leading donor to the Fund contributing over \$6.26m since inception, including a contribution of \$1.49m in 2023/24.

Where it is well managed, safe, and regular, migration can enhance the lives of those who choose to move, the countries they come from and the countries they go to. Productive migration can bring about increased employment opportunities, skills transfer, increased incomes and remittances. In recent years, the UK has implemented a new, points-based immigration system to attract the skilled workers we need to support our economy. The UK also remains committed to supporting those fleeing persecution, conflict, or instability by providing safe and legal entry routes. Over half a million people have been offered sanctuary in the UK via bespoke resettlement schemes and visa routes since 2015.

However, an increasing number of people are making dangerous journeys; many losing their lives and facing exploitation by people smugglers and traffickers. We are working to reduce dangerous irregular migration and tackle organised immigration crime, modern slavery and human trafficking. This includes introducing new legislation which will help to prevent further loss of life by disrupting the people-smuggling networks which put lives at risk through dangerous and illegal crossings. It also means working internationally to identify innovative, creative solutions such as third country partnerships. The challenge is one we can only tackle through coordinated, global action, and that is something the UK will continue to press for.

Migration continues to be impacted by climate change, rising forced displacement, increased labour needs, demographic changes, and technological innovations reshaping global economies. It is vital that international partners continue to work closely together on a 'whole of route' approach to migration in order to address these challenges, reduce irregular migration and support forcibly displaced people, in line with the Global Compact for Migration and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It

is also key that international systems continue to evolve to reflect the emerging challenges and opportunities brought about through increased global migration.

The UK calls upon the UN Network on Migration (UNNM) to give greater focus to supporting measures that implement the 360-degree vision of the GCM, including the principle of national sovereignty, reflecting national realities associated with migration. There is scope to see increased collaboration and support from the UNNM on addressing GCM objectives 2, 9, 10, and 21, and to ensure that migrants are able to meaningfully participate in relevant multilateral fora.

GCM Objectives

The following sections consider implementation on some of the key GCM objectives for the UK. This is structured to correspond to the grouping of GCM objectives used at the 2024 Regional Reviews.

GCM Objectives 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18

The UK is committed to addressing the drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their countries of origin (Objective 2). This includes through investing in international development to support poverty reduction and humanitarian assistance. We continue to be a leading international donor, contributing almost £12.8bn in Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2023.

In November 2023, the UK published a new White Paper on International Development which recognises the importance of addressing the root causes of an individual's decision to move. The White Paper sets out the UK vision for a future where migration is more safe, orderly and regular. To deliver this vision the international community needs to work together to reduce the incentives for migrants to undertake irregular and dangerous journeys, and to boost economic growth in host regions. This 'whole of route' approach to managing migration requires intervention in countries of origin, transit and destination. In this regard, UK programming aims to manage the economic and social drivers of irregular migration through programming in areas including social protection, education and skills training.

Climate change is playing an increasing role in migration, and the UK has committed to spend £11.6 billion in international climate finance between April 2021 and April 2026. These investments help developing countries to manage risk; help communities to adapt and build resilience to the impacts of climate change; promote low-carbon development; support sustainable management of natural resources; increase access to clean energy; and reduce deforestation. From April 2011 to March 2023, it is estimated that UK International Climate Finance programmes have directly supported over 100 million people to cope with the effects of climate change¹. At COP27 the Prime Minister announced that the UK will triple funding for adaptation from £500 million in 2019 to £1.5 billion in 2025. Building on this, at COP28 the UK announced £100 million to support some of the most climate-vulnerable populations adapt to

¹ [UK International-Climate-Finance Results 2023 rev.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

climate change. The UK has also pledged up to £60 million for Loss and Damage, including up to £40 million for the new Fund, and up to £20m for wider funding arrangements for Loss and Damage, which, pending negotiations on scope, could promote equitable, safe and dignified human mobility.

The UK is also working to raise international awareness of the impact of climate change on human mobility. In September 2023, the UK was proud to host a GCM Talk on the links between climate change and migration. This discussion, chaired by the Minister of State for Development and Africa, brought together expert speakers to build knowledge and understanding of programming and policy. Building awareness and sharing best practices is key to addressing global challenges like climate change, and to delivering the GCM. This must go hand in hand with greater regional and cross-regional collaboration.

Through the Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM) Programme, the UK helps to maximise the socio-economic benefits of safe and regular migration in East Africa. The programme supports activities to increase the use of data in labour market information systems and policy, to improve labour migration governance and skills recognition, and to protect labour migrants from exploitation and abuse. This work will continue in 2024/25.

The UK is working closely with European partners and others to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the drivers of irregular migration and to encourage effective partnerships with the UN system, international financial institutions, and with governments.

The cross-Government Integrated Security Fund (ISF) includes ongoing programming to work upstream with European and other partners to respond to drivers of irregular migration towards the UK, including those related to other transnational threats. The programme also works to empower source and transit countries to manage migration including through enhancement of domestic capacity and capability and develop data and evidence focusing on migration as a transnational issue with multiple drivers and consequences.

UK migration policy aims to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration (Objective 5). The UK's points-based system delivers a simple, effective and flexible way for people to come to the UK and gives UK business and educational institutions access to wide-ranging talent from around the world. The UK provides a variety of different immigration routes for workers including the Skilled Worker, Health and Care, Graduate and Global Talent routes. Additionally, there are other pathways such as the route for British National (Overseas) status holders and their family members.

There are a number of opportunities for migrants and refugees to work in the National Health Service (NHS). We ensure that any recruitment is carried out in a fair way which benefits the worker, the UK, and the health systems in a worker's country of origin. The UK's Department for Health and Social Care has worked with FCDO and developed government to government agreements with some countries to formalise and manage

the migration of healthcare workers. The agreements aim to strengthen the benefits of migration of both countries and the applicants.

A programme to bring in 50,000 more nurses to the NHS was delivered 6 months early and included support for NHS Trusts to do international recruitment well, particularly through sharing best practise on training, induction and pastoral support. This included a pastoral quality kitemark and support for diaspora groups.

The Health and Care Visa, launched in August 2020, also makes it quicker, easier and cheaper for eligible people working in health and social care to come to the UK with their families. Benefits include fast-track entry, dedicated support and discounted visa fees. All those working in the health and care sector and their dependents are exempt from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS). These measures clearly demonstrate the value we place in those who come from around the world to care for patients.

Internationally, the UK is focusing on programming which explores ways to identify, and harness the socio-economic benefits of regular migration, particularly within developing countries and communities. We seek to facilitate safe and orderly migration between partner countries, focused on pre-departure training and skills provision to support migrants to secure suitable opportunities in their region of origin, enabling people to maximise socio-economic benefits of migration. For example, the Better Regional Migration Management programme operates in nine countries across the East and Horn of Africa with the objective of making migration in East Africa more productive, contributing to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UK has a long and proud history of providing protection to those fleeing persecution, conflict or instability in accordance with our international obligations. Since 2015 we have welcomed over half a million people to the UK via bespoke resettlement schemes and visa routes. This includes Syrian and Afghan nationals that have been resettled, as well those arriving from Ukraine and Hong Kong. Over 200,000 Ukraine visa-holders have now arrived in the UK via the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and the Ukraine Family Scheme. The UK's 2023 White Paper on International Development re-affirmed the UK's ongoing commitment to providing safe and legal pathways to the UK for refugees fleeing conflict.

The UK remains committed to facilitating fair and ethical recruitment and safeguarding conditions that ensure decent work (Objective 6). The UK has a number of safeguards in place to protect migrant workers. The Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) works to protect vulnerable and exploited workers by disrupting criminal activity within the labour market. A labour provider must have a GLAA licence to work in the regulated sectors, and it is a criminal offence to employ workers without a licence or use an unlicensed labour provider.

IOM UK's GCM engagement group highlighted the UK health sector as a particular example of good practice of ethical recruitment and governance, involving active engagement of critical stakeholders. The UK Code of Practice for ethical health care recruitment sets out the UK's approach to supporting international health and social

care systems. Through the Code we ensure the fundamental principles of transparency, fairness and promotion of health systems sustainability are fully embedded in all international recruitment activity undertaken in the UK. This includes barring active recruitment from the World Health Organisation Support and Safeguard List (in the absence of an overriding Government to Government agreement). As demographic changes in the UNECE region continue to drive a need for migrant workers, greater regional collaboration which champions ethical recruitment practices will be key. It will be important to continue to ensure that countries of origin are able to retain valuable talent in the health sector.

Between 2013 and 2023 we provided over £20 million to the Work in Freedom (WiF) Programme to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking and forced labour across migration pathways in South Asia and to the Gulf. The programme reached over 770,000 women and girls in local communities. It has worked with governments on over 27 laws and policies to help better protect vulnerable migrant workers (e.g. legislation on domestic work or recruitment industry regulation); and published over 30 studies and research papers providing new evidence to policy makers. The UK is supporting the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to disseminate findings in Africa, Latin America, South-East Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This work will generate and inform policy discussions on measures needed to address forced labour and human trafficking.

The UK's Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM) Programme also works across the East and Horn of Africa improve labour migration governance and skills recognition and protect labour migrants from exploitation and abuse.

The UK recognises the valuable skills and qualifications that migrants can bring (Objective 18). In 2023, the UK launched the Regulated Professions Register (RPR), which provides information about more than 250 professions regulated by law in the UK, or parts of the UK, and professions that are subject to a Chartered designation approved by the Privy Council.

The RPR provides information on the regulation of professions in the UK in a single place, making it easy for professionals and businesses outside of the UK to find information about professions, their regulators, and the requirements to practise in the UK. This helps to facilitate communication between professionals and regulatory bodies. The website is easily accessible online, meaning that it can be accessed around the world on a 24/7 basis.

Recognition arrangements between UK and other countries' professional regulators can make it easier for overseas professionals to get their professional qualification recognised and enable them to enter their destination country workforce. In August 2022, the UK's Department for Business and Trade (DBT) launched the Recognition Arrangements Grant Programme to provide financial support towards costs incurred by regulators and professional bodies when pursuing recognition arrangements for professional qualifications. There is also technical guidance available for regulators and professional bodies to use when considering recognition arrangements.

Where appropriate and where there is an interest, the UK has also sought to agree frameworks within Free Trade Agreements that encourage and/or enable relevant bodies to engage in discussions on Mutual Recognition Arrangements. In some international agreements (for example the 2023 UK Australia Free Trade Agreement), the UK also supports regulators with a Professional Services Working Group. These groups can provide a forum through which governments can raise specific issues on professional services, which can help facilitate engagement between relevant UK and foreign regulatory bodies.

Internationally, the UK's Better Regional Migration Management Programme works to enhance skills recognition in the East and Horn of Africa.

GCM Objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 21

The UK is committed to reducing dangerous and irregular journeys that risk the lives of migrants (Objective 8 and 11). Our objective is to make global migration safer and more regular; we believe this will protect lives and create growth. Irregular migration places migrants at risk; with many losing their lives and facing exploitation by people smugglers and traffickers. UK interventions to tackle irregular migration take a 'whole of route' approach and include addressing root causes, tackling trafficking, increasing migrant awareness of journey risks, and strengthening borders and returns processes.

We have intensified our bilateral cooperation with European partners in order to reduce dangerous and irregular journeys and are seeing success. Our joint work with France saw the prevention of over 26,000 dangerous crossings by small boat in the English Channel in 2023, helping contribute to a reduction in arrivals by 36%.

The UK's Illegal Migration Act also marks a vital step forward in preventing dangerous and irregular journeys to the UK that risk the lives of migrants, by removing the incentives to take these routes.

The UK continues to work to disrupt the business model of organised immigration crime and the criminal smuggling gangs that put lives at risk (Objective 9). The UK is looking at Organised Immigration Crime (OIC) in its totality, from source countries all the way through to destination countries. In February 2024, we announced signature of a working arrangement with the EU's Border and Coastguard agency, Frontex. The deal provides a framework for regional cooperation to tackle irregular migration and cross-border crime, thereby working to prevent dangerous journeys. We intend to continue to deepen our partnership with the EU and other partners to tackle illegal migration, including through President von der Leyen's 'Global Alliance' on people smuggling.

The UK is using its intelligence and law enforcement assets to identify overseas shipments that are likely to be used by criminal gangs to facilitate illegal small boat crossings. We are also working with international law enforcement partners to disrupt these shipments. During the last few months of 2023, over 100 boats (each carrying up to 80 people) and engines have been detained, impacting the networks involved.

The UK works closely with social media companies to remove criminal content and step up the sharing of best practice across the industry and with law enforcement. The UK are creating an Online Communications Centre which includes the development of an in-house web scraping tool which will further increase the number of OIC takedowns and investigations. The UK is keen to see increased international collaboration in addressing the smuggling of migrants.

The UK cooperates closely with international partners to ensure integrated border management (Objective 11), of both the UK border and the wider EU border, in line with the GCM principle of respect for national sovereignty.

An effective immigration system is a fundamental part of the UK's approach to ensuring the security and control of our borders. The UK is working to ensure a smooth transition to a fully digital visa service by 2025. This includes the rollout of Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETAs) to all passengers visiting the UK who do not currently need a visa and the introduction of an eVisa for those who do.

The facilitation of safe and dignified returns (Objective 21) is a priority for the UK Government and its diplomatic missions overseas. We are intensifying our efforts to secure the return of Failed Asylum Seekers, Foreign National Offenders and other individuals with no right to remain in the UK. The UK is working collaboratively with key countries across the world to improve these arrangements, including those along key migratory routes.

The UK's reintegration programme incentivises returns, by offering practical and in-kind financial support to those returning, demonstrating a person-centric immigration system which is responsive to the needs of potentially vulnerable individuals. It reduces the push factor of irregular re-migration upon return, eases the burden on fragile infrastructures in countries of origin and strengthens the capacity of the receiving countries to accept their nationals.

As part of our participation in the Rome Process, the UK is working with the Italian government to co-fund a project to promote and assist the voluntary return of migrants from Tunisia to their countries of origin.

The UK is keen to see increased international collaboration and cooperation in facilitating the safe and dignified return and readmission of migrants.

The UK remains committed to eradicating all forms of modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking (Objective 10) in line with achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 by 2030.

The UK works closely with international partners to prevent and reduce modern slavery to the UK, as well as support global efforts to eradicate slavery. The UK's National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. We have strong partnerships with countries with high numbers of referrals of their nationals into the NRM (including Albania, Romania and Vietnam). We engage with these countries at all levels, including through Ministerial and senior official engagement, law enforcement cooperation, and through our Modern Slavery Fund programme partners.

We also work closely with likeminded partners (including the US) and multilateral institutions (including the UN, OSCE and 5EYES forums) to share best practices in tackling modern slavery and promote raised standards globally. Between 2016 and December 2023, the Home Office spent over £40.4 million through the Modern Slavery Fund to fight slavery overseas and reduce the threat of trafficking to the UK, including in Albania and Vietnam.

The UK also works with international partners to reduce the risks for those most vulnerable, particularly women and children, and to ensure that survivors are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives. In addition to funding the Work in Freedom (WiF) Programme, the UK is also funding a UNICEF project in India which aims to strengthen mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS) for child-survivors, to reduce the potential for re-trafficking and protect vulnerable children and families from unsafe migration. This work is complemented by UK support for the Indonesian Ocean Justice Initiative (IOJI) which will deliver a project that will inform the draft Governor Regulation concerning prevention and handling of trafficking in persons (TIP) in Central Java, by ensuring that the needs of needs of civil society, unions, and survivors of human trafficking, including migrant workers, are heard.

The UK's migration Integrated Security Fund (ISF) programming operates in Nigeria, assisting authorities to build robust border management procedures through new technology, training and increased collaboration, benefitting security and stability in the region. It engages with border communities to address the factors that enable an environment where smuggling and trafficking flourish.

GCM Objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22

The UK recognises that regular, well-managed migration can deliver a range of positive development outcomes (Objective 19) including poverty reduction and increased global prosperity. The FCDO's migration for development workstream enhances and demonstrates the development benefits of well-managed migration, empowering migrants to realise full inclusion. For example, the Better Regional Migration Management Programme (BRMM) highlighted previously aims to make inter-regional migration in the East and the Horn of Africa more productive, contributing to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme helps migrants integrate into their host communities by promoting access to social protection benefits for migrant workers, developing their skills of potential and encouraging recognition of skills and prior learning, improving Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise growth and access to finance.

The UK works hard on improving financial inclusion for migrants, including through promoting remittances as a driver of development (Objective 20). We are convening diaspora communities, remittance service providers and other Government departments and partners to seek solutions that can boost financial inclusion and drive down costs associated with sending and receiving remittances. Alongside our work on the World Bank Remittance Statistics working group, the FCDO is also exploring future programming that will test out an innovative method for reducing fees associated with the sending of remittances.

The UK remains committed to providing access to basic services for migrants in line with their migration status (Objective 15 and 22) and provides access at the same levels as outlined in our 2022 Voluntary National Review.

GCM Objectives 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23

The UK recognises that international cooperation is an essential element in making migration more safe, orderly and regular (Objective 23), and to achieving our domestic migration goals. The UK uses our engagement at international fora, including most recently at the Council of Europe, European Political Community summit, UN General Assembly, the G7 and the Global Refugee Forum. Through this engagement we have strengthened collaboration with the international community and secured ambitious partnerships to tackle irregular migration.

We are committed to engaging with international partners on a ‘whole of route’ approach to address the challenges of irregular migration and disrupt the business model of organised immigration crime. We also aim to demonstrate the development benefits of well-managed migration, through support for international processes that promote better managed migration, including the GCM. In migration-specific fora, such as the Global Forum for Migration and Development, the International Dialogue on Migration, and the Intergovernmental Consultation on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC), we act as a constructive participant, sharing UK experience, coordinating with like-minded countries in pursuit of political consensus, and promoting the implementation of agreed commitments. The UK has also confirmed that it will participate in the Rome Process, working with the Italian Government on upstream projects on migration routes to help address the root causes of migration.

Recognising the importance of international cooperation, we have continued to provide significant funding to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MMPTF) in order to support GCM implementation, contributing over \$6.26m since inception, including a contribution of \$1.49m in 2023/24. The UK reaffirms our commitment to support the Fund and calls on other Member States to join us in contributing.

International cooperation also underpins our approach to **reducing vulnerabilities in migration (Objective 7)**. The UK’s 2023 White Paper on International Development re-commits the UK to helping to deliver a more effective global approach to migration through implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, reducing the risks and vulnerabilities faced by migrants.

The UK works to raise awareness of journey risks, whilst **championing the use of evidence and data in migration policy and programming (Objective 1)**, with the aim of reducing migrant vulnerabilities. Integrated Security Fund (ISF) programming also works to develop data and evidence focusing on migration as a transnational issue with multiple drivers and consequences. Strengthened collaboration on data gathering in the UNECE region would be valuable in order to enable the continued implementation of evidence and data-driven policies. IOM UK’s GCM engagement group has also mentioned the need for strengthened data on missing migrants.

The UK also carries out work to advocate for the **meaningful consideration of gender in migration contexts**, including via its partnership with IOM's Gender and Migration Research Policy Action Lab (GenMig).

The UK would like to see further emphasis from IOM on ensuring that migrants are able to meaningfully participate in relevant multilateral fora. There is also scope for increased collaboration in order to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities faced by migrants worldwide.

Next Steps

As migration continues to be impacted by climate change, rising forced displacement, increased labour needs, demographic changes, and technological innovations reshaping global economies, it is vital that international partners work ever more closely together on a 'whole of route' approach to migration. The UK remains committed to the Global Compact for Migration as a mechanism which promotes deepened cooperation, and as a framework for more coherent global action. We will continue to take into account both its objectives and guiding principles through our policy, programming and advocacy work.

The UK will work to further strengthen international co-operation on migration, reflecting the growing challenges faced by migrants, and countries of origin, transit and destination. This includes strengthening our partnerships with the UN, with the international financial institutions, and with governments in order to ensure that priorities and resourcing reflect the current nature of mixed migration flows.

Through this activity we will work together to address the challenges of migration head-on; tackling irregular migration and reducing the risks and vulnerabilities faced by migrants. We will also realise the benefits of well managed migration, which will be vital if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.